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Dear Dave —

Thanks for handling that #6000 check business. Thanks also for telling them the truth — mother's answer was surprisingly restrained under the circumstances.

As to Joel's problem — I'm not going to answer your comments in detail. Your views on a number of subjects appear to be greatly modified by your ideology and by other factors that I consider to be non-rational, and I just get sick and tired of writing interminable letters to answer all the points you raise — as I just finished doing with this family business. So I'll just make the following remarks:

(a) The objective diagnostic tests mentioned in that book do not claim to determine whether anyone is sane or insane (as far as I can remember, the word "insanity" was never even used in the book). The tests only claim to determine whether the person has a certain chemical peculiarity of the brain. In the most severe cases the person will be what in common parlance is called a raving lunatic; in the most mild cases he will show hardly any symptoms in his thought or behavior.

(b) As for explaining mental illness on the basis of "skewered [do you by any chance mean skewed?] perceptions or thought processes" it's not clear what you are talking about. Presumably, mental illness is "skewered" (skewed?) perceptions or thought processes, so what does this explain? As for explaining mental illness on the basis of "the 'insanity' of society itself", this is certainly plausible in many cases, since our society often uses

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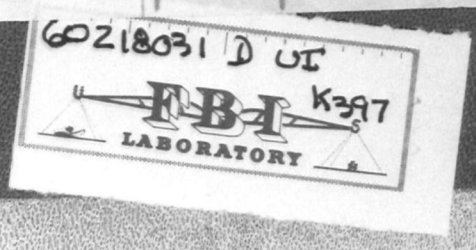
"mental illness" as a label to pin on anything it disapproves of. But this is not reasonable in the case of schizophrenia, or at least not in the more severe cases of schizophrenia. Example: some severely schizophrenic children walk awkwardly with their legs wide apart as if they had difficulty keeping their balance; the reason is that, to them, the floor appears to be heaving and pitching under their feet. Are you going to argue that the floor really is heaving and pitching and that society is insane for regarding it as stationary?

(c) You "strongly doubt that even most of the hard-core brain theorists would recommend him [Joel] for chemical therapy". Of course no responsible doctor would recommend him for chemical therapy before he has undergone diagnostic tests. But on the basis of the limited information in your letter, I'd say that any specialist in this field would certainly recommend that Joel undergo the diagnostic tests. The fact that he expresses himself clearly and intelligently in some areas — or even in all areas — is by no means incompatible with schizophrenia. My knowledge is of course very limited, but on the basis of what you told me I'd say Joel is a likely candidate for schizophrenia. For instance, he says his sense of time is very poor. If I remember correctly, distortion of the time-sense is a typical symptom of schizophrenia. As to Joel's oddities: Do they result from some ideological commitment? Are they a response to some emotional need? Are they rational consequences of some original perception that he has arrived at? Or are they



simply the pointless and disorganized responses of someone whose mind is falling apart?

(d) In many cases schizophrenia gets worse with time. In such cases, if I remember correctly, the book said it was important to begin treatment early, because later the problem may be more difficult to control.

(f) On the other hand, specialists may be over-enthusiastic about the use of their own tools, and so may exaggerate the benefits of the drugs and minimize the undesirable side-effects.

(g) Also, there are all kinds of value-judgements involved in whether or not one wants to use such drugs, even if one has already concluded that they will benefit the individual patient in the purely medical sense. I won't discuss those here — you can make up your own mind.

(h) You really ought to read that book. Though your library doesn't have it, you can probably get it through the interlibrary loan service. I've got books that way myself and the process is very simple — it's almost as easy as just taking out a book, except that you have to wait a couple of weeks until the library gets a copy of the book from some other library. Ask the librarian. Title (I think): The schizophrenias, yours and mine; author — I don't remember; it was written by several doctors. It was put out by an organization called (if my memory serves) The Schizophrenia Institute, in the early 1970's. There is a reference book called Encyclopedia of Associations (ask the reference librarian). Look under "Schizophrenia" and you should be able to get the

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address of the Schiz. Institute or some other organization that can give you information on the subject of schizophrenia, clinics or specialists in Joel's area, etc.

If you can't get the book or the information, let me know. There's just a chance I can get the book back on loan. When I traded that book back in at the place where I trade paperbacks, the woman who was keeping store showed an immediate interest in the book, because, she said, her brother has schizophrenia. When I visited the store a couple of weeks ago, the book was not on the shelves; it may have been put back on the shelves after I traded it in and then someone bought it. But it's also possible that that woman kept the book. In that case, if I explained the situation, she might be willing to loan it to me so that you could read it.

But really I think you can probably get it through the interlibrary loan service.

Okay, once you read that book you'll know everything about schiz; that I do, so let's drop the subject. I get sick of these interminable discussions by letter, especially when they touch on philosophical issues. It's a vast expense of time.

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